DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 145 469 CS 203 692

TITLE	A Primer in Publicity for Education Associations. PR Bookshelf No. 6.
INSTITUTION	National Education Association, Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE	69
NOTE	28p.
AVAILABLE FROM	National Education Association, The Academic Building, Saw Mill Road, West Haven, Connecticut 06516 (Stock No. 1273-9-00, $1.00)
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.83 Plus Postage. HC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	Committees; *Community Relations; Elementary Secondary Education; Guidelines; News Media; News Reporting; *Publicize; *Public Relations; *School Community Relationship; *Teacher Associations
IDENTIFIERS	*Advertising

ABSTRACT

This booklet is designed to help local education associations utilize existing publicity techniques and develop others to provide visibility for the associations and their teachers. Discussion covers the role of publicity and its relationship to public relations (examples and guidelines are given), the development of a news-gathering network within the schools, the relationship between publicity practitioners and media personnel, and presentations on radio and television. In addition, advertising, developing good community relations, and presenting displays and exhibits are investigated. Appendixes include 26 suggestions for projects with publicity value and discussion of a prototypical publicity committee. (KS)

****
* Documents acquired by ERIC include many informal unpublished *
* materials not available from other sources. ERIC makes every effort *
* to obtain the best copy available. Nevertheless, items of marginal *
* reproducibility are often encountered and this affects the quality *
* of the microfiche and hardcopy reproductions ERIC makes available *
* via the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). EDRS is not *
* responsible for the quality of the original document. Reproductions *
* supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made from the original. *
****

ED145469

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

A Primer in Publicity For Education Associations

PR Bookshelf No. 6

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

National Education Association

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) AND USERS OF THE ERIC SYSTEM."

CS 203692

Copyright 1969
Division of Press, Radio, and Television Relations
National Education Association
1201 Sixteenth Street, N.W., Washington, D.C.

Symbol of the United Teaching Profession

This symbol, adopted by the NEA Executive Committee in 1966, combines the legacy of the past (π for παιδεια, the ancient Greek word for education) with new direction for the future ( ). The spherical triangle serving as the background represents the mutually supportive programs of local, state, and national education associations to advance education.

In one sentence, then, the design symbolizes the forward thrust of education through a united teaching profession. Registration of this symbol with the U.S. Patent Office as a "collective membership mark" has been completed.

Attractive enamel and silver jewelry containing this symbol—pins, lapel buttons, tie tacks, charms, and tie bars—may be purchased by those who are members of local, state, and national associations. Decals for automobile and classroom windows and name tags for meetings are free. For information and order blanks for these items, write to the membership division of your state association or to the Division of Affiliates and Membership, NEA, 1201 16th St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

CONTENTS

page

Publicity, Part of PR 4
Examples 5
Guidelines 6
Input Needed for Output 7
Think Like a Newsman 8
Get Acquainted 9
Some Basic Pointers 10
Getting on the Air 12
Advertising Can Be Effective 14
Developing Community Relations 15
Projects with Publicity 16
Speak Right Up 18
Displays and Exhibits 20
Appendices
Appendix A 24
Appendix B 26

A service of the public relations department of your state association and the NEA's Division of Press, Radio, and Television Relations.

Foreword

"Where have you teachers been all this time?"

That could be a typical reaction from a newspaper editor, news director of a radio or television station, or community leader when a member of a local education association contacts him for the first time.

Only recently have teachers through their local associations started to speak out on educational issues. "It is especially important for all leadership at the community level to recognize that an expression of the teachers' opinion and posture does not nullify the position of boards of education and administrators who have traditionally spoken for education," says William Baxter, public relations executive for the California Teachers Association, "but, essentially, broadens the scope and availability of news and information for the general public.

"Integrity, responsibility, and full disclosure are inherent aspects of this communication process to which teachers aspire. We must maintain with mass media and the public all the elements of professional relationships we have urged upon boards of education and administrators."

Should teachers be concerned with the business of *news*? There is little choice. Education is one of the day-by-day top news stories. Comments Barclay Bayley, public information and communications director for the Nebraska State Education Association: "To bend an old adage: what the public doesn't know can (and probably will) hurt you. It can be a case of no news being bad news where a local association is concerned."

This booklet is aimed at helping local associations utilize existing publicity techniques and suggests others to focus attention on and gain visibility for the association and its teachers. Publicity, of course, can take a number of forms. This booklet, therefore, touches upon a variety of ways publicity can be obtained. In particular, members of the association's public relations committee, especially the persons who handle news media relations, public service programming, and the community relations assignment, may find helpful suggestions. (See Appendix B for a possible prototype of a PR committee.)

Publicity, Part of PR

Publicity and public relations (PR) are not synonymous. The two terms have been used interchangeably by some people because too many public relations programs have been little more than publicity efforts.

Public relations for an education association is a planned and systematic two-way process of communication between the association and its membership and external publics. Its function is to influence opinion through the association's performance. Publicity is a principal tool of public relations. If PR is considered, as it is by some people, as "doing a good job and telling everyone about it," publicity is the process of telling about it.

There are many definitions of publicity. Most of them agree with the one given by *Webster's New International Dictionary:* "Information with a news value, designed to advance the interests of a place, person, cause or institution, usually appearing in public print." In other words, publicity is information with a purpose—to make something or somebody known.

It's obvious, then, that publicity is important—but it is not *the* most important part of the public relations process. Successful publicity must be based on good performance, because, as the old adage points out, "What you are speaks so loudly I cannot hear what you say." Scott Cutlip and Allen Center, authors of *Effective Public Relations,* underline the role of publicity in the larger framework of the whole public relations process:

> It [publicity] cannot be used for any length of time as a substitute for good works or for desirable corrective action. It can only serve as a spotlight to focus attention on good works and to clothe institutions with personality. In publicity practice, the operator of the spotlight naturally tries to put highlights on the good and to soften the unfavorable with shadows. But the publicist must always remember that there are other operators with spotlights in a position to cast a revealing glare in the dark corners of any institution.

Local education associations, then, need both performance (an active program) and publicity. Neither the program nor the publicity is enough in itself. As Cutlip and Center point

out, "There must be words and images, too—or else the good works are apt to be overlooked or misinterpreted by those with differing purposes or by those separated by distance."

Examples

Publicity, usually thought of as some form of printed information or visual presentation, may be an act or some sort of device designed to attract public interest. For example, publicity can be created by—

- Issuing a statement
- Organizing a committee
- Conducting a survey
- Arranging to make a speech
- Holding an election
- Recognizing an achievement
- Announcing a plan or program
- Staging a tour, display, or exhibit
- Observing an anniversary
- Reporting results of work or study completed
- Observing special days, weeks, or months
- Inviting an expert from out of town
- Localizing national reports or studies
- Taking a stand on a public issue
- Showing a film
- Holding a meeting or conference
- Distributing posters.

In any of these or other similar publicity springboards, two forms of communication about the event or action take place. News stories in public media, for example, of any of these events lead to conversation about the event in the community.

Guidelines

Here are some important guidelines to keep in mind before tackling the publicity task:

• *The character of the association* is usually reflected in the publicity efforts of the organization. Irrational statements, exaggerated claims, or careless remarks contained in association news releases may please some members, officers, or staff, but often result in a negative reaction by editors and readers.

• *An organization cannot control* all of the publicity it may receive. This is why experienced public relations people caution organizations and institutions to "tell your own people first" when developing a public relations program. The association may take one stand on a public issue through prepared news releases, but if most of the members of the association are publicly saying a different thing or acting in a different manner, the "controlled" publicity may well be overshadowed by that which the association could not, or failed to, control.

• *Content and absorption* of content are more important in determining public opinion than the amount of publicity. What is said, and how that message is absorbed, usually counts more than how often the message is repeated. Advertising people call this "penetration"—which one authority defines as "what is possible for the consumer to carry in his head."

• *The message received* is not equivalent to the publicity disseminated. Dissemination does not equal communication. Association leaders, vitally interested in every word of their news release, carefully read every word when it appears as a news story in public print. But casual readers usually do not hang on every detail. Psychologists remind us that we attend to that which we wish to attend to. Advertising experts echo: "The consumer tends to remember just one thing from an advertisement—one strong claim or one strong concept."

• *Too much publicity* can be as unwise as too little. While most associations need not be concerned with this point, it should be noted that news media personnel, as well as the public, can form negative impressions over a period of time if they are subjected to a consistent amount of publicity, much of which is

trivial. So, it's important to focus publicity techniques on the programs which are necessary for the association's survival and future.

• *Finally, not everything the association does should be publicized.* It may be best to avoid publicizing some activities. If the association members decide, for example, to actively campaign for passage of a school operating fund tax proposal, too much publicity of teachers' campaign activity may be harmful to passage of the issue. Citizens may react negatively, claiming teachers have a "vested interest" in raising taxes to raise their own salaries. That's why, in many communities, work by teachers to help passage of a school issue is often done without fanfare or publicity.

For years the public relations chairman of many local associations was really just a publicity chairman. He was often selected each year on a rotation basis ("Who hasn't had this yet?") and had as a major task sending out a news release announcing the annual election of association officers.

Today, many local associations are developing an active public relations *committee*. It's a key committee now, not an honorary chore. PR committees are composed of energetic people who are recognized by their fellow teachers for their ability to get things done. Booklet #4, *Internal PR for Education Associations*, in this "PR Bookshelf" series gives some specific examples of how to organize the PR committee. Booklet #2, *Tips for the PR Chairman for Education Associations*, points out that hard and final guidelines for the activities of a PR committee are impossible to define. Differences in size, experience, and environment of local associations—plus variation in the types of PR programs these associations implement—make it unwise to define exactly what should be done.

Input Needed for Output

The news media subcommittee chairman, one of the workhorses on the PR committee, faces the same problem as his colleague, the association editor—where to find information.

"I'd be happy to send out news releases describing the professional activities of our members," a typical news media chairman might comment, "if I could figure a way to get teachers to tell me about them."

There is a way—and organization is the key.

Booklet #5 of this "PR Bookshelf" series, *Publishing a Newsletter for Education Associations,* describes the use of a "beat" system utilizing teacher-reporters in every school in the district. If this news-gathering network is organized to provide information for the editor, the same network (and much of the same information) can form the basis for news releases. A telephone chain within the association membership can be tapped by both the news media chairman and the editor. This "chain-communication" technique is described in booklet #5, as is the use of news request forms.

Another important part of the organization for publicity is record keeping. The news media chairman should keep a card-file list of contact people, news media personnel, leaders of community organizations, and others with whom he works.

He should maintain file copies of every news release he sends, for these are a big help to future news media chairmen. They also serve as a valuable historical file and as a ready reference for comparison between what was sent by the association and what was used by the news media. That's one of the quickest ways to learn how to write for a newspaper or for broadcasters—see how editors handle the copy they receive from the association. The association should keep a scrapbook of items published. The clippings make it easier to document the publicity program and illustrate the publicity efforts.

Think Like a Newsman

Working with the mass media is a speciality in itself—that's why booklet #9 in this "PR Bookshelf" series was prepared. *Press, Radio, and TV Tips for Education Associations* offers specific help for news media chairmen in their daily contacts with newsmen.

But in a review of the overall publicity job, some basic considerations of working with mass media need to be covered, repeated, and stressed. Newspapers, radio, and television are the major media for publicity, and they are in business for one main reason: to provide readers, listeners, or viewers with information, which is often supplied by news releases from numerous organizations and associations. Publicity on a local association's program or project may be news to that association, but it must also be news to the newspaper or radio or television station that will use it. News is anything timely . . . of interest to people. And a key to success in preparing association news releases for a news editor is to try to think like an editor.

The first thing a newly appointed news media chairman ought to do is to forget the kind of stories *he* wants to get printed or on the air and decide what the *editor* or local news director might like. Actually, the news media chairman serves the association best when he helps meet the needs of local news editors. He's a middleman between the editor and the local professional teachers organization—sort of a part-time staff member of the newspaper or radio or television station covering the association.

Get Acquainted

To fulfill this role, in order to provide newsworthy information for local news media, the association news media chairman should get personally acquainted with news media personnel. Newsmen need to get to know their news sources. If the previous news media chairman did not have a contact list of newsmen, both newspaper editors and broadcast personnel, the new chairman should build one. Important editors or reporters should include those of any *metropolitan dailies* which cover news of the community (and in large newspaper organizations, this may be a specific suburban writer), *suburban dailies* (in this case it may be another regional reporter or an education writer), or editors of tri-weeklies, semi-weeklies, or *weeklies* that cover the particular community. Editors of a free shopping news "throwaway" may also be anxious to receive some local news releases. News directors of both local radio and regional television stations should be included on the basic news media contact list.

Next step: Place an advance telephone call to newsmen to learn the least busy day and hour to contact them personally. The first get-acquainted visit should be brief. Newsmen need to know the name, address, school, and home telephone number of the association's news media chairman. The news media chairman is the contact man, but the official spokesman is most often the association's top elected officer, the president.

The news media chairman needs to know each newsman's deadline, how copy should be prepared, and the correct name, title, address, and telephone number of the editor or reporter. The get-acquainted visit is too often overlooked as the basic step in building good media relations, which, like all others, are just plain good human relations.

Some Basic Pointers

Inexperienced publicity practitioners will soon learn from any newsman some basic "musts." Information sent to newspaper editors and broadcast newsmen must be *accurate, timely,* and *brief.* Five basic questions need to be answered: *Who, What, When, Where,* and *Why* . . . and sometimes *How.* Copy should be typed and composed of short words, short sentences, and short paragraphs. Educational "pedaguese" may be all right for a curriculum bulletin, but terms should be translated into everyday conversational language for the public, via the media.

The consumer relations department of the Sperry and Hutchinson Company gives news media chairmen a dozen "basic B's for publicity":

1. *Be the only person* from your group to contact news media. Two members calling the same editor or program director are bound to bring conflict or confusion.
2. *Be quick* to establish personal contact with the right persons at the newspaper and radio and television stations in your area.
3. *Be sure* to write everything down. Train your memory, but don't trust it.
4. *Be prompt* in meeting every deadline.

5. *Be legible.* Type news releases. Erase and correct errors. Don't use carbons, except perhaps for your own file copy.
6. *Be accurate.* Double check dates, names, and places before you submit your copy.
7. *Be honest and impartial.* Give credit where due.
8. *Be brief.* Newspaper space and air time are costly.
9. *Be brave.* Don't be afraid to suggest something new if you honestly believe you have a workable idea. Media people welcome original ideas when they're practical and organized logically.
10. *Be business-like.* Never try to obtain publicity by pressure of friendship or business connections. Never ask when a story will appear. Never ask for clippings.
11. *Be appreciative* of all space and time given your group's publicity. The media giving it also have space and time for sale.
12. *Be professional.* Members of the press are always invited guests. Never ask them to buy tickets or pay admission. Arrange a special "press table" for large banquets.

11

Booklet #9 in this series of publications for education associations, *Press, Radio, and TV Tips,* offers details on preparation of news copy, style, feature stories, press conferences, handling unfavorable news, photo tips, and radio and television news.

Publicity is often a matter of percentages. Some stories get printed, some do not. If association stories are rejected, the news media chairman should carefully review the content of the unused material. Chances are, if the information lacked local interest or had no reader interest at all, if it was poorly written, inaccurate, or contained disguised advertising, the copy ended up in the wastebasket. Or it might have been rejected because it arrived too close to the time when the paper had to go to press or the newsman on the air. It might have been rejected at the last minute to make room for more important news. If the newspaper or station is regularly and carefully

studied to determine style and content, if copy arrives on time, neatly and accurately prepared, chances are the news media chairman's batting average will steadily rise.

Getting on the Air

The broadcasting industry offers real opportunities for education associations. Radio and TV stations pride themselves on their record of public service. Although there is no law which says a station must devote a certain amount of time to community organizations, radio and television stations are licensed to operate "in the public interest, necessity, and convenience," and they are sensitive to programming educational news and special programs.

Broadcast public service programming is in two categories: programs and other on-the-air exposure. A special one-time-only *program* or series of programs may take the form of interviews, panel discussions, demonstrations, etc. *Other on-the-air exposure* includes brief spot announcements during the day (public service spots), news items included in regular newscasts, or broadcast editorial statements presenting the viewpoint of the station's management on community issues and events.

The first and most important step in utilizing broadcast services is a visit with the program director. Personal contact (by appointment, please) will let the local association's public service chairman know if public service time is available and in what way. The National Association of Broadcasters (NAB) cautions persons seeking publicity that there just aren't enough hours in a day to satisfy every request received for "free" time. To improve the chance of getting public service time, NAB suggests local associations make certain that—

- The message is important and of widespread interest.
- It is presented in the best possible form.

NAB has prepared a handy guide, *If You Want Air Time,* which is valuable for the PR committee's news media and public service chairmen. This free handbook is available from local

stations that hold NAB membership, or by writing to the Association, 1771 N Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036. The guide points out that any type of public service programming requires planning in cooperation with the station:

- *Be prepared to submit specific facts and workable ideas.* Don't waste the station's time on a fishing expedition with vague generalities.
- *Accept suggestions.* You will be working with experts in a field that probably is alien to you.
- *Know your limitations.* A 30-minute interview might seem ideal for your purpose, but spot announcements, if well done, are much better than a long program which is inadequately prepared.
- *Don't expect radio or television stations to change formats* and/or habits to suit you.
- *Check with the station first* if you plan an appeal for funds. Many stations have a policy against it.

13

Education associations all over the country have taken advantage of broadcast opportunities by preparing spot announcements carried on radio and TV stations to publicize back-to-school safety tips, American Education Week, the teaching profession, how parents can help a child's study habits, curriculum innovations, classroom developments, local educational scholarships, and the like. Stations often have set aside public service times during the week for educational purposes. In many instances, the content and direction of the programs is placed in the hands of local education associations. For many years, the Worland (Wyoming) Classroom Teachers Association has produced a weekly public service program on station WKOR. The program deals with the school curriculum, how subjects are taught at various grade levels, and innovative programs in the school system. Radio station WHLS in Port Huron, Michigan, received a "School Bell Award" from the Michigan Education Association for a daily, 5-minute program called "The School Bell," which consisted of taped reports by teachers and students direct from city classrooms.

Letters of appreciation to station personnel for providing public service programming should be an automatic follow-through. Station management is anxious to learn of any reactions, and thank-you letters for public service broadcasts help the station in submitting proof of programming to the Federal Communications Commission when the station's license comes up for renewal. NAB adds one other important public relations consideration for the association public service chairman:

> If a station gives you free time to advertise your cause, don't surprise the owner by having him open his newspaper to find that you *bought* a half-page. If you do, the next surprise may be your own when you seek free broadcast time.

Advertising Can Be Effective

Many times local associations find it necessary to purchase newspaper space or broadcast time in order to communicate specific information to the public. When news coverage or public service broadcasts do not thoroughly cover the association's message, newspaper, radio, and/or television advertising may merit consideration.

Advertising can be effective for many reasons. Although newspaper space rates and broadcast time may seem expensive, it is an economical way of reaching thousands of people with a specific message. Advertising can send public relations messages to citizens at a low per-individual cost. Advertising also offers flexibility in timing and controlling a message.

A growing number of associations have found advertising an excellent way to help secure public support for the association's cause during crisis situations. In addition, many local associations purchase advertising in newspapers and on radio and television broadcasts to create a favorable image or correct misconceptions.

Associations involved in intensive professional negotiation with school boards are sometimes criticized by the public because of misunderstanding or lack of information about the nature of the problems under discussion. So advertising is sometimes a necessary, dramatic step to explain and interpret the association's position and concern. An excellent way to "anchor" a newspaper

ad or close a broadcast commercial is to couple the name of the local association with a brief descriptive phrase; for example, "The Horace Mann Education Association, representing 400 professional teachers and 12,000 children."

Contact your state association's director of public relations for assistance if advice about purchasing advertising is desired.

Developing Community Relations

Active participation of association members in community projects and events is a sure-fire way to get publicity and produce positive PR. Developing good community relations should be a specific assignment of the PR committee.

It might be a good idea, for example, if the association obtained a membership in the local chamber of commerce. The president of the association, local executive secretary, public relations chairman, or community relations chairman should be designated to attend C of C meetings and take an active part in local chamber activities. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce encourages local chambers to develop an education committee and take an active part in helping to solve community educational problems. Often such a committee has not been established or is not active, due to lack of involvement by school system administrators. This is a "natural" project for the education association. It brings educators, businessmen, and industrialists together on a regular basis in a cooperative effort to improve education in the community. An important product of participation by the association is the building of personal contacts and improved understanding with community business leaders.

Nearly every community in America has a United Fund or Community Chest campaign to raise funds to support public and private social, health, and youth agencies. This is another "natural" for the education association—a chance to lend its leadership and organizational talents to an important annual community project. Local education associations can encourage members to contribute to the annual fund-raising campaign, to join volunteer ranks at campaign time as solicitors, or, better still, to assist the

association in solicitation of school district employees in the campaign.

Some education associations solicit members separately from other school employees, set up their own campaign organization, and make weekly reports at campaign meetings of the contributions by association members. Publicity reports of outstanding contributions by teachers, reported under the banner of the association, contribute positive benefits for teachers and the association. And a newspaper photograph of association leaders receiving a United Fund award for outstanding giving is "good copy."

Projects with Publicity

Here are some other projects with publicity values accomplished by local associations:

- An easy opportunity to publicize the teaching profession and the education association is offered through the annual November observance of *American Education Week*. Each year, a kit of publicity materials is available for local associations who want to take advantage of this national observance. In 1967, the 1,325-member Dayton (Ohio) Classroom Teachers Association took the classroom to the public during American Education Week. Actual classes were held in two shopping centers in Dayton, involving a total of 150 teachers and some 3,000 students from more than 60 public and parochial schools. And every evening a 20-minute play pertaining to that day's AEW theme was presented. (Materials and idea kits for local chairmen are available from the NEA. Write to: AEW, Publications Division, NEA, 1201 16th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.)

- The Benton (Arkansas) Classroom Teachers Association sponsors an *annual dinner* for local citizens. The event encourages cooperative efforts of educators and laymen toward a common goal—high quality of education for students in the community.

- The Ronan (Montana) Association of Classroom Teachers launched an ambitious *two-year project* to secure

needed equipment for special education classes and the school playground. The association sponsored a benefit dance open to the entire community and enlisted later the support of local service clubs in the community fund-raising project.

- The Lexington (Massachusetts) Education Association sponsored an *exchange program* with teachers from a city in Sweden. The LEA was aided by many community groups and organizations in a two-week program of activities welcoming the Swedish teachers to America and American education.

- The Canton (Ohio) Professional Educators Association joined forces with education-minded groups and individuals in the community to win public support for passage of a *tax levy* for schools.

- The Milford (Delaware) Teachers Association sparked *a campaign* to influence state plans for establishment of a community college. Milford teachers were joined in the campaign by the Sussex County and Kent County Education Associations, the Delaware State Education Association, the parent-teacher associations of the Milford Special School District, the Georgetown Board of Education, and the Delaware School Boards Association.

Local associations have pitched into other types of community projects, and each has formed the basis for highly successful publicity. One association secured an old truck, repaired and remodeled it, and stocked it with books. Teachers took turns during the summer operating the "mobile library" in a small community that lacked such facilities.

Another association enlisted the help of members of the Junior Chamber of Commerce to clear a deserted field and convert it into a "tot park," a playground for preschoolers. A free summer tutorial program was offered by one association and proved to be extremely popular with parents of children who needed special help during the summer months. One association, in a northern city where amateur hockey is the dominant sport, offered free

lessons in conversational French to young hockey players who traveled to neighboring Quebec to play hockey with Canadian teams.

Some associations have taken the initiative in organizing a community resources committee. The committee compiles a catalog of community resource people who volunteer to come into the classroom to explain or demonstrate various skills, hobbies, or professions, or will help plan field trips for classes to local business and industry.

Speak Right Up

An association speakers bureau is an excellent means of involving members in a continuing personal publicity program. It works two ways, too. A speakers bureau not only increases the amount of face-to-face contact with community groups and organizations, to help "humanize" the association, but it also provides a channel of "feedback" to association leaders of information on what citizens think and ask about schools, teachers, and the association.

Here are some suggestions for organizing a speakers bureau:

- A memo describing the purpose and objectives of the bureau should be sent to all members. A tear-off-and-return form at the bottom of the memo asks those interested to indicate their interest and note the topic of the talk(s) they are prepared to give. These forms should be returned to the subcommittee by a specific date, early in the school year.

- The subcommittee on community relations, which will probably handle the speakers bureau assignment, other members of the PR committee, and association leaders should hammer out an agreement on a basic talk or series of speeches about the association. The outline for a standard talk should include discussion of the goals, program, and projects of the association. The finished talk can then be drafted in manuscript or detailed outline form, or both. This provides the format for a basic talk on the association which can be given by an officer or volunteer speakers

to adult groups in the community. This way, all association speakers are covering the same ground.

- Once the list of volunteer speakers is drawn up, the teachers handling this project should prepare a simple but attractive brochure or leaflet describing the services of the association's speakers bureau. This publication can be widely distributed to leaders of every civic, fraternal, and service organization in the community—they are always looking for good program materials for meetings.

- Program chairmen of community clubs and organizations should be instructed in how to arrange for a speaker. Night and day telephone numbers for contacting the speakers bureau should be provided.

- When the roster of speakers is set, each volunteer should be asked to attend a briefing session, arranged by the committee and spearheaded by the president of the association. It isn't necessary that all speakers be polished performers. The most important requirement is a well-organized talk and a worthwhile subject.

- Every speaker should receive adequate background information and a basic information sheet about the year's goals and programs of the association. This will help him answer specific questions raised by members of an audience about his professional association. Speakers also need to be alerted to the importance of relaying to association leaders the nature of questions, queries, and concerns that are raised during or after the association speaker's appearance.

- Appearances of association spokesmen or classroom teachers talking about a phase of the curriculum lend themselves to legitimate news releases and continue the job of regularly publicizing the good work of teachers.

Development and operation of an association speakers bureau sets up channels of communication with segments of the community that are invaluable for the local association. This opportunity to establish personal, direct contact with leaders of

civic clubs and organizations often pays high dividends when the association wishes to carry the message of the teachers' viewpoint during professional negotiation.

Utilization of many members of the association on the volunteer rostrum circuit is good for the association that is seeking productive ways of using the talents and interests of its members. And it has solid publicity value for the association.

Displays and Exhibits

In addition to the written and spoken word, there is still another channel of communication open to alert publicity-minded people—displays and exhibits.

A display is simply a way of showing or telling something. It can range from the simplest single photograph to a complicated exhibit booth with moving lights and dramatic sound. Users of exhibits and displays are reminded, though, that the objective is to (a) get the pedestrian visitor to stop—get his attention, (b) hold that attention long enough to get his interest, and (c) convince him of your point of view or stimulate him to immediate or future action.

These objectives require showmanship and fresh, new ideas. And teachers are equipped with both. Don't hesitate to ask other teachers for help in order to achieve an eye-catching exhibit or display. The association has ready access to talent and skills found in art classes, in vocational classes, from the ranks of fathers in PTA units and dads' clubs, or from the ranks of resourceful school custodians. Local advertising and sales promotion people can give valuable professional help, usually in the form of free advice on wording, color, placement, and other technical considerations.

A handful of valuable guiding principles should be kept in mind when displays are being developed:

- *Always use an effective caption or title sign.* Short catchy words are best. These should be as big as necessary for impact and usually not more than 6 feet from the ground. Make sure they tell the story quickly and well.

22

- *Include something that attracts attention.* That can mean color, moving objects, sound, changing light, or a pretty teacher! But make sure the attention-getter doesn't detract from the central point of the display.

- *Hold the interest long enough to get the message across.* Try to use as few words as possible, not more than six or eight. Good displays tell one, coherent, clear-cut message quickly. If that message has steps, these should be labeled 1, 2, 3, and so forth.

- *Some displays promote decision and action.* If there is a leaflet the visitor should take with him, a large arrow pointing to the action step should indicate this. It's annoying to be told to "Take One" and find the box empty. Make arrangements to keep containers for printed materials full.

- *Good displays are neat, artistic, and attractive.* Artists, decorators, and designers can give advice here. They can advise how to keep the display simple and uncluttered and focused on one or two basic steps.

An excellent basic resource guide for displays is available through the NEA, *Putting Education on Display*, Stock No. 051-01856 (50¢). Write to Publications-Sales, 1201 Sixteenth Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036. The booklet offers help with color, space, design, lighting, readability, motion, and sound.

Local associations can find a number of key locations for displays calling attention to special projects of the association, American Education Week, curriculum innovations, or saluting the teaching profession. School buildings are usually the most readily accessible and logical, especially during scheduled parent-teacher conferences. Libraries, banks and stores, laundromats, church meeting halls, doctors' and dentists' waiting rooms, barber and beautician shops, theaters, and store windows can be used for eye-catching displays and exhibits.

Appendix A

ASSOCIATION PROJECTS WITH A TO Z PUBLICITY VALUE

A Circulate the association newsletter to a key list of influential citizens and newsmen.

B Hold demonstration classes in store windows or in central locations of shopping centers.

C Operate a public library "story hour" for preschoolers or elementary school children after school, on Saturdays, or during the summer.

D Organize a book fair to encourage reading for younger students.

E Sponsor a weekly series of radio or television programs on how subject matter is taught.

F Develop a slide presentation showing the typical teacher day, then present the slide-and-script story throughout the community.

G Sponsor activities for senior citizens in the community.

H Arrange a back-to-school night for mothers and fathers, or, better still, grandparents only!

I Stage "little theatre" productions of teachers interested in the theatre arts.

J Organize teacher art exhibits.

K Operate a "helpmobile" with curriculum aids and teacher consultants to assist first-year teachers.

L Arrange for a portable "bookmobile" to take library books from the schools into neighboring or rural areas during the summer months.

M Sponsor a volunteer tutoring service after school or on Saturdays.

N Organize a teacher-administrator exchange day, in which board members and administrators get a taste of the classroom while teachers struggle with the problems of the front office.

O Arrange for teachers to switch schools for a day—high school teachers exchanging places with elementary teachers.

P Sponsor scholarships.

Q Organize athletic events in which teachers compete in a sport against students.

R Aid teachers in planning and conducting a visit to the home of each student.

S Provide bumper stickers, signs, badges, and lapel buttons to promote some project of the association.

T Conduct tours of schools and classrooms.

U Arrange for association members to wash cars, wait table, pump gas, etc., for charity.

V Promote a feature story in a newspaper describing the unusual, off-beat part-time or summer jobs held by teachers.

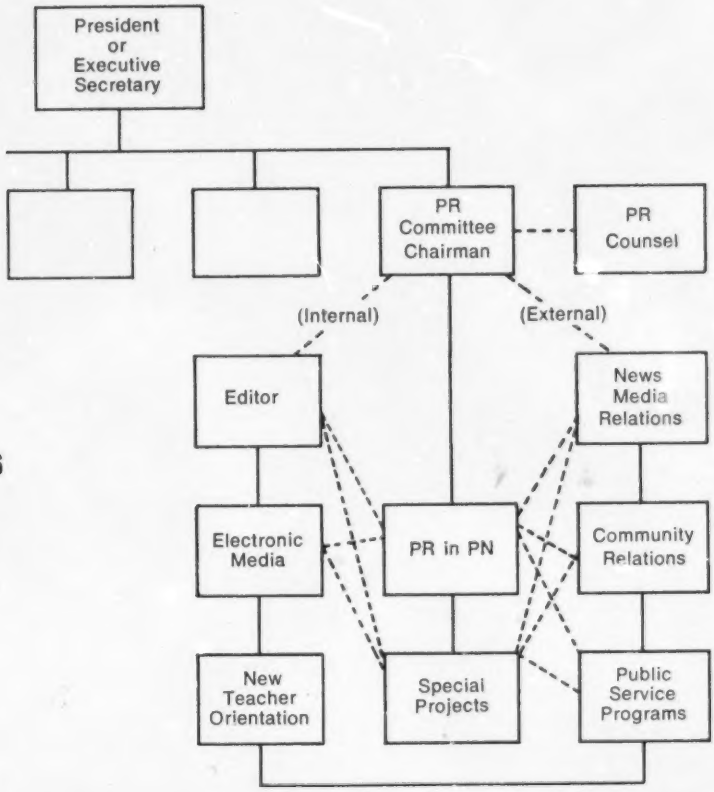
W Stage teacher talent shows to benefit a scholarship program or a local charity, or to add zest to a parent-teacher meeting.

X Sponsor fairs, festivals, and family fun nights.

Y Organize a school rummage sale or flea market for charity.

Z Honor outstanding community citizens with an award, plaque, dinner, or scholarship.

Appendix B*



The subcommittee chairmen (editor, electronic media, new teacher orientation, and so forth) who serve under the PR committee chairman must maintain close liaison with other association chairmen. Each subcommittee chairman must involve other

* **Keep in mind that this is an example. It may be too large a committee for some local associations; too small for others. It is a point at which to start and naturally must be tailored to fit the needs of each local association in order to be effective.**

association members as members of his committee.

A paramount danger in the above prototype chart is that it may be considered a paper panacea for the association's PR problems. The chart is only effective if it is tailored to the needs of the association and if the PR committee chairman and the subcommittee chairmen and members are *actively engaged* in working on association *problems*.

The following are some of the duties that the subcommittee chairmen might perform:

PR Committee Chairman: Coordinates and supervises the activities of the PR committee.

Editor: Edits the association publications, such as the newsletter or newspaper, and serves as consultant on all other association publications.

Electronic Media: Develops and organizes ways to communicate other than the printed word. Such methods might include an automatic answering device for the telephone, an automatic device for the telephone which records membership inquiries, the "telephone tree" to pass on information to association members, and other forms of audiovisual communication.

New Teacher Orientation: Coordinates the PR aspects of welcoming new teachers to the community.

PR in PN: Learns the techniques and handles the public relations aspects during professional negotiation. While mostly "internal," this job also has important functions with the news media. (See booklet #3.)

Special Projects: Handles such promotional programs as American Education Week.

News Media Relations: Coordinates news releases with the newspapers, radio and television stations.

Community Relations: Organizes and develops projects with the public, such as a teachers' speakers bureau for clubs and organizations.

Public Service Programs: Cooperates with radio and television stations to obtain free air time and develops worthwhile programs for stations.

PR Counsel: Counsels or assists the local association. This can be the state association, the NEA, or a private firm.

27

This is booklet #6 in a series of 10 booklets written for education associations by the public relations department of your state association and the NEA's Division of Press, Radio, and Television Relations.

Additional copies of this booklet can be obtained from your state association or at $1 each from Publications-Sales, National Education Association, 1201 Sixteenth Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036. Orders for $2 or less must be accompanied by payment. *Quantity discounts:* 2-9 copies, 10 percent; 10 or more copies, 20 percent.

Order Stock No. 381-11914, *A Primer in Publicity*.

For further information about other booklets in this series, write to the public relations director of your state association or to PR Bookshelf, Division of Press, Radio, and Television Relations, 1201 Sixteenth Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

Other booklets in this series are—

Booklet #1—School Finance Campaign Handbook
#2—Tips for the PR Chairman
#3—The PR in PN
#4—Internal PR
#5—Publishing a Newsletter
#6—A Primer in Publicity
#7—The Feedback Process
#8—Developing Citizen Committees
#9—Press, Radio, and TV Tips
#10—Community Decision-Making